

/13 cont. /

181 guayere /sic/ laden with fruit or with a deer across his back,
155 he comes also with his soul impregnated by nature, which later the magic of his imagination transforms in a thousand ways during the shadows of the night and which he later gives birth to in the form of tales and legends, saturated with phantasmagorias.

155 To understand well the great assimilation of the Indian with nature, we must bear in mente that metamorphosis, anthropomorphism, and animism form, to put it one way, the basis of his mentality, more imaginative than logical.

30. Wise ethnologists have already noted that primitive peoples, who live in an environment of wild and untamed nature, as yet not in the domain of mankind, undergo an extraordinary development of the imagination. And, therefore, if of all it is said that imagination is "the madwoman of the house," when we speak of the Indians we must say that imagination is "the mistress and absolute owner of their soul."

From this great predominance and overflowing of the imagination onto the other intellectual and volitive faculties, I believe to be derived all the moral defects and aptitudes previously listed as being of the Indians: inconstancy, short-sightedness, moral weakness, good humor, simplicity, brotherhood.

774 The imagination of the Indians, in its facet of fear,
155 sometimes terror and panic, populated the clouds with uaranapí, the hills with mauaritón, the mountains with piaimá, the waters with rató and tuenkarón, graves with orodán, hollow trees with amariuak, plains with seipán, and subterranean cavities with tiripuení.

● 776 Another of the great creations of the Indians' imagination is the Kanaimá, which we shall have to discuss in particular in another section of this work.

600 Here is complied with, to the letter, the famous phrase of the Latin poet, in which he says, "Primos in orbe terrarum timor deos fecit," for men's fear when faced with great natural

/47 cont. /

190 Every religious concept presupposes or includes within itself these three motivations: reverential love, supplication, and gratitude. Magic, by contrast, hides beneath its cloak these three opposites: fear or dread, imperative conjury, and selfish material interest. For this reason magic has been called a vain religion, that is, hollow, empty, with only an outward appearance, a mere hull or husk. "Magic," says Grandmaison, "is nothing but formulism, pure self-interest. Science without a basis, falsification or corruption of true religion, deals with its object without respect and without love."

104. Fundamentally, thus, religion and magic represent the eternal struggle between the spiritual and material, soul and body, sincerity and hypocrisy, formulism and realism: worship in spirit and in truth as opposed to worship in this or that exact /48/ place and with many artful words, to rend the heart as opposed to rending clothes, to offer a contrite and humble heart as opposed to offerings in the spirit of ransom and bribery, to avoid hypocrisy and not pharisaic lightness, to fear not that which kills the body but that which demoralizes the spirit, to avoid not the legally impure contact with certain things or others, nor eating with unwashed hands, but the action, the word, and even the intimate evil desire, etc., etc., according to the teaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

776 105. The result is that the Indians do not love but fear
782 the disembodied spirits or orodán and mauarí, as possible agents of purely physical ills; neither do they invoke them with submission or reverence; they try to disarm or bribe them with material things, which they desire or fear the same as we do; finally, these spirits are not offended by immoral actions but by physical actions, nor do they take over the evil person, but the weak, the sick, etc.

789 The sorcerer does not supplicate, properly speaking, any superior being; he believes that he knows a means by which some things or natural causes work upon others or find themselves obliged to work. As a certain author states, magic is the art

/56 cont. /

846 121. On top of these and other theories, the Pemón Indians, who practice the couvade, themselves have explained to me the reason and extent. Therefore, as far as they are concerned, there is no doubt that the reason for this is the following. They say that: /five plates appear here/ /57/ a) "every alteration of the health of the father or of the mother, any work which might lead to tiredness, any fatigue or disturbance of the progenitors, etc., has repercussions on the newborn, who are a part of them." They believe, thus, in sympathetic influence, to which they suppose children to be extremely sensitive and which has repercussions on the child, as a part of a whole, from the parents.

843 Men as scientific as Alexis Carrel believe that there is some truth in this and thus there is an explanation of certain phenomena of telepathy, prescience, etc.

846 b) The Pemón add to this another reason and this is that, according to them, the potorí or piá, each of them the engenderer of a definite species of animal and plant, on being cut down or destroyed, take vengeance on human sprouts or offspring. Another thing is that the mauarí and other spirits are bothered by certain actions of men, such as, for example, by the rolling of stones down hills, and then they also take vengeance on their little children, who are easier prey for their anger and their evil influences. This second cause is, thus, belief in the harmful influence of invisible spirits and of the progenitors and, for this reason, defenders of living beings, whoever they may be /sic/.

843 It will suffice to transcribe a few precautions, among the very many taken down from their dictation, so that the two principles which have been stated may be quite clear:

784 1. A woman who is enceinte must not eat cassava which has been returned to the house from which it came, so that, when she gives birth the child may not turn back to the breast.

/59 cont. /

the bloody element, which for all primitive people and for all children is a synonym for vigor, spirit, and health. This step is really critical; frequently it is feared, it is surrounded with mystery, and in many cases even goes so far as to produce hysteria and mental disorders; and it is frequently the point of departure for many disturbances both organic and moral. Thus, in both senses did Father Vilaríño, S. J., say that the age between 14 and 24 years was the decade of death.

125. The Pemón distinguish in a girl three ages: true girlhood, in which she is muré; an intermediate one, in which she is /60/ manak-dakán, when her breasts are about to appear; and puberty, in which she is auroni-pué, in which menstruation has occurred.

126. This third age is one of confinement and diet for a more or less long period. The Pemón do not build special ranchos apart for these pubescent girls, but small apartments within the common house itself, or, more exactly, garrets as in high habitations. It seems that formerly the confinement and diet were more rigorous and prolonged; now they are only observed in the two or three first manifestations of menstruation.

According to notes of my native collaborator, Ernesto Pinto Armellada, which I have before me, among the principal foodstuffs prohibited to pubescent girls were moriche worms, turkey hens, deer, etc., in order to avoid bad childbirth; in addition, salt and sweetness, so that their teeth will not be damaged, since it is already known that "formerly women chewed kachirí."

127. The object of this confinement is not making them pale nor to keep them away from men's glances, but to preserve them from the assaults of lustful or lovesick spirits, such as amariuak, rató, mayikó, rató, etc.

When detailing the observances prescribed by the ancients for this age in women, it is said that:

a) they must lie down in the hammock in the straightest position possible;

/64 cont. /

- 600 142. Peace to men of good will. 143. Cases and more cases.
144. A very significant story.

- 776 137. The Indians have the notion of Kanaima up to the marrow of their bones, and there is no reason, however convincing it be, capable of persuading them to the contrary. And when one wishes to convince them that there are no such Kanaimas, nor such things, and that it is all imagination and fear that they have, they propose so many cases and with such circumstances that they are capable of convincing anybody who is not really up on things.

When traveling along the road they see its footprints -- the Kanaima walks on tiptoe or on the heel so that its path may not be recognized --; just the other day an Indian who was in the field grabbed Kanaima and then his spine began to hurt; a certain Indian woman, going for water to the ravine, saw Kanaima and got sick; another man, while hunting, heard its whistles and its cries like those of a child; finally, the Indians in a certain village had to move their dwelling because of the abundance of Kanaimas, and those in another one killed two or three Kanaimas with machetes. Such conversations on this subject are the daily bread of the Indians.

- 776 138. And although their ideas on this matter may not be
829 very unanimous nor very logical, in general they state the following:

That the Kanaimas are Pichaukok Indians; they are not mythological beings or demons, but Indians of another, pre-existent race in these regions.

That the Kanaima are many; that toward the Venamo, Iru-tepui, Kama, etc. -- more remote and uninhabited regions -- they live in stone houses or under stones.

That the Kanaima generally does not attack Indians when there are several of them but when meeting someone alone who is straggling behind.

829 /64 cont. /

776 That the Kanaima customarily hides behind some tree, which is at the side of the road; that he first attacks by lashing at the eyes or entangling them with vines; that then he falls on his victim with sticks; and finally he blows (a magical blowing) on his head and on his feet so that he'll get sick.

776 That ordinarily the Indians do not die at the hands of the Kanaima, but several days later; and that they must neither /two plates appear here/ /65/ say that they looked on Kanaima nor that Kanaima caught them, but that they saw a tiger or that they tripped over a stick, etc., until such time as the danger may pass, because otherwise they might get even sicker.

That the cry of the Kanaima (let us say the war cry) when he attacks with other companions is "Sové!" or "Soé!"

That for no reason and never does the Kanaima attack those who are not Indians.

139. They also say, endowing the Kanaima with magic properties, that he sometimes converts himself into a fox and goes to dig in the graves of Indians killed by him; and that at other times he converts himself into Auoineripué, a legendary being who drinks the liquid of decomposing corpses, which is his kachirf and with which he becomes mad.

Finally, that the Kanaima does these evil things to Indians for revenge, since they expelled them from their land, and from envy, since they are poorer in belongings than the Indians themselves.

776 And thus we have in conclusion that the Kanaima is the
781 bogeyman and more than the bogeyman of all the Indians; a
756 sort of persecution mania, which has taken over their weak minds; an almost incurable illness, since they believe that there is no possible remedy for anyone who has been caught by Kanaima and that there is no other recourse than to get into the hammock to die, if there is no enchanter who can come to cure him with stronger blowings than those of the Kanaima.

776 And, on the other hand, if there were no Kanaimas, the
761 Indians would be immortal or slightly less than this, since there is scarcely a death that they do not attribute to Kanaima.

/65 cont. /

140. Up to here we have said what the Indians think; later my readers will see what the missionaries think. First, allow us this question: Could it be true, as some assert, that the Indians with these and other ideas intimately rooted in their being are happier believing in the piaches and not in the Fathers, in Kanaima and not in Jesus Christ, living in a religion of pure fear and not in the love of Christianity? We do not yield the point to him who says such a thing; and it seems to us that those who so state know the Indians only on the outside, like students who know books by the back, or by the cover, as others say.

776 141. He who knows how to read between the lines will easily agree with us in these ideas, which have let themselves be glimpsed in the very statements that the Indians make, although incoherent, as though based on imagination.

1. The Kanaima is reminiscent of the more or less remote battles that these Indians sustained with those of other /66/ tribes, or perhaps internal wars, and in which they frequently made use of ambushes, disguises, etc.

2. The Kanaima is a typical case of the psychology of fear or of hysteria, which makes them see and hear what does not exist and to believe in their own lies and to be frightened of fictitious creations, like a certain type of animal which is frightened of its own shadow.

3. Frequently the true Kanaimas are the Indians themselves, the most evil and immoral of them, who take advantage of the fear that the others have of this scarecrow in order to take vengeance, to rob and to kill; then they say that it was Kanaima and thus they are free from punishment and have no responsibility in the eyes of the others.

So that these three causes: the stories of bloody fights, perhaps not very far in the past; the great imagination and innate timidity of the Indian; and a few real cases of treacherous attacks, have come to create this phantom of the Kanaima, which obsesses the Indians and of which it would be difficult to free them even over a long period of time.

/66 cont. /

660 142. Upon dealing with this subject, we have accidentally had come to mind the story of that first fratricide, who was not satisfied with the promise of God that he would not die a perfidious death and thus lived an errant and fugitive life on earth, persecuted by the voice of blood.

And although we said at the beginning that the Indians are thoroughly imbued with the concept of Kanaima, it is hoped that little by little they will be abandoning it, since if they were at one time perfidious and bloody in their vengeance, now we have redeemed them from their barbarism, they have the right to enjoy that peace promised to men of good will.

143. To convince the Indians, and those who may read this, of the ideas here expounded, we are going to relate a few facts that we know with certainty.

797 a) On a certain occasion a missionary, who was inspecting
123 their agriculture, thinking exactly about this matter of the
776 Kanaima, tried to imitate the whistle that the Indians attribute
781 to him, with such success and with such bad luck that an Indian
who happened to have gone to get water, dropping the camaza,
took off running like a buck, and crying in a loud voice got
into the hammock shaking with fever.

123 b) Some travelers, camped near the Kamá waterfall and
776 who were accompanied by Indians, out of idleness got the idea
781 of shouting "Kanaima, Kanaima," and then, however hard they
tried to persuade the Indians that it had been a joke, it was not
possible to do so, since the Indians swore that they had seen him
and they spent the rest of the night in painful vigil. /67/

159 c) A few years ago there in Akurimá lived two Indians,
776 called Joaquín and Alberto; the first, who had a very bad pre-
578 vious history, since with other companions he had killed three
civilized persons while they were sleeping, wanted to wreak
vengeance on the second, with whom he had had a strong
altercation. For this purpose he put on the clothing in which
his mother had given birth to him, painted himself up well with
annatto and other cosmetics, and in this strange form presented

/67 cont. /

159 himself in the field. But this time playing Kanaima did not
● 776 serve him any purpose, since his companion recognized him
578 and, far from being frightened, fell upon him with blows of a
stick, so that, going for wool, he came back fleeced and,
with his back redder than annatto, ran off to hid his sad fate.

538 144. The Indians themselves, for whom it is easier to let
776 the imagination run to create a tale than to tie together the
ends of various facts and ideas to form a well-reasoned out
argument, have in their folklore this extremely significant
story:

In a certain place there lived two Indians, each one married to the other's sister. During the night they heard Kanaima's whistle, who, or so it seemed, was going around the house with the intention of catching someone. One of the women with the greatest secrecy got down from the hammock and began to spin cotton. The Kanaima whistled again: Soé, soé. The Indian woman opened the door as though to throw out the seeds, and she saw the Kanaima hiding behind a tree. Then speaking in a loud voice in order to cover her intention, she said to her husband: Here is a rat which is eating up my cotton seeds, come shoot it with an arrow. Her husband leaped out of the hammock, picked up his bow, and approached his wife; she said in his ear: The Kanaima is there behind that pole, shoot it. The Kanaima was watching, fooled, to see what would come of that scene, when all of a sudden he received a blow with an arrow on his forehead. Protected by the darkness of the night, he went running to his rancho; to hide what had happened he told his mother that he was shooting at a toucan and that the arrow had come back and wounded him on the forehead.

When day came the Indian woman went to her mother's house and found her brother sick; her mother explained to her that in trying to shoot a toucan he had wounded himself. She returned to her house and told this to her husband. He suspected

/67 cont. /

- 538 that he could be the Kanaïma of the night before and went to
● 776 see his brother-in-law; he wanted to see the wound but he re-
sisted showing it to him; then he was even more suspicious
and by force he tore off the bandage. The arrow was still
stuck in; then he recognized that it was his own and, pulling
it out of him violently, he said:

"This arrow is mine; you were not shooting toucans, /68/
you were trying to act like Kanaïma, and this happened so that
you will learn a lesson."

And let what has been said suffice, since the proverb warns
us that "intelligentibus, pauca."

Chapter XVII

Are the Indians Shameless or Modest?

100

145. Clothing and virtues, modesty and morality.
146. Individual morality. 147. Modesty seeks clothing.
148. Nudists and Freudians. 149. Accidental morality.
150. From the word to the act. 151. Knowledge of morality
or ethics. 152. Polygamy. 153. Negative and positive morality.

145. This question, asked perhaps in a merely physiological
sense, gives us the basis for dealing at the same time with the
morality of the Indians, since, according to what St. Paul
said, clothing is the image of internal virtues and modesty,
of moral decency.

- 156 146. In the first place, it is clear that one cannot talk of
the Indians in the plural without making any distinction, as one
can about mice, since for them, as for everyone else, there is
value in the saying that "not even the fingers of the hand are
the same." Every individual among them, simply because they

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868 162. Practical teaching. My dear interlocutor can well understand that the Indians, without setting up a pedagogical chair and a group of educators, do educate and teach their children practically. Their children, in turn, through the natural instinct for imitation, tend to copy what they see in their parents.

857 And, as we imagined, male children practice the handling of their miniature bows and accompany their elders on hunts, and show the aggressiveness and bravery appropriate to their sex, even though it may only be "killing" little pieces of sticks or stones in little improvised hammocks, making little clay cakes like cassava cakes, etc.

867 163. Oral teaching. The other teaching, oral and intentional, is very much rarer than among us; however, I have gathered in this regard some data of the old people who, obliged
577 more than they may wish to lead a sedentary life, give their
538 advice to the young people. In the tales which, as has often been said, form the native oral literature, the defects of gluttony, lack of personal cleanliness, carelessness in the face of what is strange and unknown, conjugal infidelity and other sexual vices, lack of love for children, etc., are all ridiculed.

538 It is clear, however, that their morality does not attain
577 the perfection of the Gospel and that frequently in the earliest
864 legendary narrations the spirit of revenge and the refinement of torture of victims is taught; there also occur in these stories sexual scenes which are extremely crude, without their taking any care about telling them in the presence of little children, who acquire a very precocious knowledge and perhaps even a very premature initiation. In this particular they evidently have a rather blunted feeling of morality.

● 776 164. The bogeyman. In childhood, recourse is frequently
861 taken to the deceit of the enek ("bug" or "funny little fellow"), which is our coco /"bogeyman"/, so that the children will not go far away, so that they will not cry, so that they will obey, etc. They use, thus, the stimulus of fear. Among other threats

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776 of this sort, which I have taken down in my ethnographic notes,
861 I remember as very appropriate that mothers of screaming children threatened to take them out of the house and call the virumaimá or some other great bird of prey to carry them off. To lazy ones carrying small guayares or loads, they say that the buzzards will dirty over those whom they see walking along unloaded.

861 165. Punishments. My interrogator assumes that the Indians under censure or correction never get to the point of punishment, and that all censure of offenses and abuses consists of expressions /76/ like those of the weak Heli: "You don't want to do that, my children; you should not do what is bad; don't make me sad." Frankly, my questioner is in error, and I must clearly confess to him that these Indians, in addition to the gentle and exhortatory "nauandok neke" ("one must not do or be thus") know how to use a quite ungentle hand of punishment. It should suffice to open the dictionary to see that among them exist aipopuetok, "the whip," and popuetok, or "simple beating."

In my ethnographic notes there are noted down two other truly savage punishments which, so it seems, mothers apply with some frequency to their naughty, impudent, etc., children. The application is made by placing them face down lying in a hammock and at a certain height above a candle and then putting on the candle ajf so that it will make them suffer a coughing fit, which through personal experience I know to be extremely bothersome. Other times they stick up the rectum the same irritant, either in powder with salt (chikirimá) or simply chopped up (puemuei estamosak).

584 166. Marriages. Although these natives are extremely
581 free in the selection of a consort, and we have never seen anything remotely like the purchase of a woman, perhaps because of the very fortunate (in this case) poverty in which they live, it is clear to us and we have noted that parents positively advise

/95 cont. /

- 776 a) The Pemón do not have an autochthonous idea of a God Creator and Savior of each of his creatures, nor particularly of man. I believe very apt Joubert's statement: "Seeking words, ideas are found," and from it I deduce that, since the Pemón lack any word of their own to say "God," they also lack this concept. And I do remember with no little laughter that the "pra man, there is none," with which /96/ they answered someone who was interrogating them about this, was interpreted as the equivalent of "Brahma."

771 b) Their moral code, although it is known, is not made
577 dependent upon a supreme will, nor is it thought that moral actions might have the sanction of a reward or a positive punishment, external and not inherent to the action itself either in this life or in another one, although this life is clearly admitted with regard to its existence but very confusedly regarding its form and manner.

Those who state flatly that "there neither exists dogma without morality, nor morality without dogma," should explain this anomaly. I believe simply that they ought not to exist logically; but from this it cannot be deduced that they do not exist in fact.

- 782 c) No acts of worship are known of: neither of love and adoration, nor of sacrifice and placation. Neither are images or idols seen, nor anything, in general, of what makes up the external demonstrations of respect to God and his saints.

208. And in lieu of these three essential elements, they have the following:

- 776 a) A belief that each one of the species of animate and inanimate beings, which exists in the world, has its progenitor or its own primogenital ancestor, endowed with specific qualities, from whom individuals derive their faculties, of whom he is the protector and avenger in a purely physical order. These are the imá, the piá, said in generic form, and the potorí and the pachí, according to whether these ancestors or genealogical trees are considered masculine or feminine.

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774 Correlative to this belief there exists among these Indians animism, which, like all the other -isms, more than a theory or elaborate doctrine, is a mental tendency which consists, as Grandmaison says, "of imagining everywhere, behind perceptible objects, life, activity -- by extension, will, powers, passions -- more or less traced from the human type, anthropomorphic." Thus also Mons. Valbuena says of animism, that it must be considered "not as a religious factor, at least in principle, but as an intellectual conception, as a general mentality."

776 b) These piá or -imá (call them genii, godlets, or numbers) are neither offended nor pleased by moral or immoral actions, but by physical actions -- sometimes substances -- which are damaging or pleasing to them or to their descendants.

753 To the native mentality true good things are this life and that which is related to it, health especially, food, etc.; and the bad things also true are illnesses /two plates appear here/ /97/ and pains and, especially, death, the most terrible and most feared evil, not so much because it is the unknown which opens into the beyond, but principally because of the loss of the good things and family so loved here.

775 To the Pemón there is no doubt but that the soul survives,

787 although this conviction is not deduced by them from logistic arguments, but from intimate personal experience and from very vivid imaginative impressions while asleep and in other states of exaltation.

756 c) Finally, we have in place of acts of worship various
788 observances, based on a belief in the afore-mentioned numbers
778 or potorí; in place of priests, the piaches; in place of prayer, the charms which we have already defined in another place, and, in lieu of the supernatural, the magical.

789 We would say once more that magic, although dealing with spiritual influences, is not religion; it does not deal with morality, but with physical acts, corporally maleficent or beneficent, psychic only insofar as the soul is united with the

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234. Drinking bout — etaripán. (A jocose suggestion was made that this is the origin of the tribal name Taurepán.)

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235. Dance (in general) — eren.

Social dances (these are more exactly characterized elsewhere):

236. parichara.

237. tukii¹. Literally "humming bird."

238. warepan.

239. warepan — müirepen.

240. ware.

241. karot².

Magic (or piache's) dances:

242. mari

243. - 244. eremba, with several varieties according to the purpose, e.g. oköyima-eremba, for bites and ulcers.

245. Parichara costume: as a whole — parichara-pon.

246. head-dress — aro³.

247. skirt — (1) maripadai (cf. maripa, No. 443, from the leaves of which the skirt is made).

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Magic and religion.

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248. *Medicine-man (shaman, piache) — piatsan. Taurepán (Koch-Grünberg) piatsan. Cumanagoto (Adam) piache. This is, of course, the origin of the Venezuelan Spanish word "piache."

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249. *Canaima (a sort of evil person or spirit, see section on religion) — kanaima. This word and the strange idea that it represents are practically universal among the Caribs. Williams shows beyond much doubt that our word "cannibal" comes (through Spanish) from this word and not, as has been generally accepted, from the name of the Caribs themselves.

250. *Evil spirit (personal name of a spirit) — piaima. In British Guiana piaches are called "piaiman" or "peaiman" and it is supposed that this is derived from some form of piatsan (even Williams apparently subscribes to this, quoting in Thurn to this effect without criticism). However, this is clearly the word piaima and in Kamarakoto and Taurepán, probably in Carib languages generally, piaima is an evil spirit or mythical being, a familiar of the piaches, perhaps even a sort of celestial piache, but not an actual human medicine-man. Moreover in these two dialects piaima is a name of one particular spirit, not a general term.

756 unknown to any of my informants and the piaches themselves are quite unapproachable on the subject. 173

756 Piaimá, a supernatural being or spirit, is said to have initiated the first
 776 piaches into their mysteries by exactly the same procedure that I have described
 [287] for the earthly piache's initiation of an apprentice. He is also said now to be corporeally visible to a piache (but to no one else) and to converse with and advise the piaches. Although I lack specific information on the point, it therefore seems highly probable that the initiation involves the invocation of Piaimá and that some, at least, of the various curative procedures also involve his presence and co-operation. However this may be, it is definite that the piaches are in rapport with Piaimá and that he is for them co-operative in some degree but that for other Indians and without the intervention of a piache he is exceedingly dangerous and may appear in the guise of a savage killer. He is thus essentially evil, a devil in fact, and the piaches derive much of their power through personal acquaintance with this devil and through their ability to temper his wrath or to direct his activities into desirable channels.

The Theory of Disease.

753 Although I shall not go into detail on this subject, the Kamarakoto theory of disease is so inextricably linked with magic and religion that it must be briefly summarized. It is not now true of the Kamarakotos, as has been stated for various Indian tribes, and probably was never true that they considered quite all ailments to be supernatural in origin. The manifest relationship between insect and snake bites and their immediate effects (but of course excluding malaria and other secondary effects) is naturally recognized. All swellings and ulcers are ascribed to such causes, even when this is not correct. It is not clear to me whether an ulcer, for instance, is supposed to be due to an actual bite, unnoticed at the time, or to the bite of a supernatural insect or snake. Although there is no clear recognition of their cause, colds, constipation, indigestion, and the like (but not the fever that may arise from these) are also now considered usually to have natural causes, although in this case one cannot be
 [285] sure that such an opinion is not relatively recent. For these ailments believed to be natural in origin spiritual remedies may nevertheless be applied, such as
 [287] remedial dancing for ulcers. Physical remedies, including various herbs and infusions, are, however, in common use for them and this purely medical subject is outside the scope of my report.

[254] Diseases for which there is no obvious physical cause, particularly fevers of any sort, are considered to be wholly supernatural in origin. These are usually caused by kanaimaton (plural; singular - kanaima).

173 [see footnote on p. 320, category 116 - Analyt]

Kanaïma.

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[171] The concept of kanaïma, common to practically all Caribs with some
[124] variations in nomenclature, is a difficult one to grasp. Despite their apparent-
[114] ly complete willingness to do so, the Kamarakotos did not succeed in giving me
any clear-cut definition of a kanaïma, and this appears to have been the ex-
perience of every investigator whose interest was more than superficial and who
did not jump to the conclusion that one aspect of kanaïma was a complete de-
scription (almost all the literature has been summarized by Roth, and Koch-
Grünberg adds interesting observations from the Taurepánes). Clearly the con-
cept is to the Indians themselves very complex and rather vague. The basic
fact is that a kanaïma is hostile as such (i.e. is not a kanaïma with respect to
a person to whom he is not hostile) and that by supernatural means he causes
almost every sort of illness and almost all deaths.

A kanaïma may be a real person but he does not cause injury by physical
but only by magical means and his enmity is usually secret. The Kamarakotos
deny that any members of their tribe are kanaïmaton, although doubtless they
[648] may be such from the point of view of other tribes. Some Maquiritaires are
kanaïmaton to the Kamarakotos and wild or bad Indians, naturally of hostile or
at least foreign tribes, are generally believed to be such.

In this aspect, the activities of a kanaïma are typical of human witchcraft.
The Kamarakotos deny that there are, or at least that they are acquainted with,
any particular spells or magical devices that are used in order to cause harm,
but such a denial is inevitable since confession of such knowledge would be
dangerously near confession that its possessor is a kanaïma. Rather vague re-
ports suggest that such devices are known in other tribes. Thus a Taurepán told
[171] Koch-Grünberg that certain Makuchi kanaïmaton placed the spit of their enemies
in a tube of bamboo and used this in a magic spell to cause death, which finds
[551] exact analogies in European witchcraft. It is highly probable also that the re-
[123] fusals to reveal real names is based, at least in part, on belief that they can be
used magically to harm the possessor, and the excessive caution of the Indians
toward us in this respect hints that they were not quite sure that we were not
kanaïmaton.

[825] Some kanaïmaton are animals, or animals that may appear as men, or
men that may appear as animals. Here the concept falls into the world-wide
wer-animal complex, but even in such a case the harm done is not, as usual
with werewolves and the like, physical but only supernatural.

754
● 776 There is no sharp distinction between a kanaïma that is a real person and
one that is not. A kanaïma that is believed to be a real person may not be
such in fact. Thus the Kamarakotos believe that there are flesh-and-blood
Indians in nearby forests who are kanaïmaton, but these probably exist only in
the Kamarakoto imagination. Other kanaïmaton, although they appear, if at

754 all, in human guise, are recognized as being supernatural beings and not really
 ● 776 human. Others are spirits that can materialize in almost any form, and still
 others are wholly invisible and formless supernatural beings or even represent
 a supernatural influence that is hardly thought of as possessing individuality
 or personality. Even these indefinite distinctions hardly seem to be very clear-
 771 ly present in the Indian mind. In a broader sense, kanaima is the evil princi-
 778 ple of the universe and its manifestations are endlessly protean and essentially
 indefinable, an idea approaching the Polynesian mana (see Karsten's discussion,
 which, however, does not include an explicit understanding of more specific
 aspects of Carib kanaima).

778 Anything unexpected, a noise, a light, a branch falling, an unusual bird,
 781 a sudden shadow, may be greeted with the cry of "kanaima," a word that is
 822 heard constantly on Indian lips, both jokingly and fearfully. In general any-
 thing that startles them and that is not immediately explicable by some normal
 and expected cause is kanaima, and this is obviously related to their real fear
 of being startled and to their efforts to avoid startling others.

778 Even this does not exhaust the aspects of kanaima, for it includes true
 754 spirit-possession. Kanaima, or a kanaima, may enter the body of a victim and
 remain there, notably in the chest, causing fever and eventual death unless
 exorcized.

755 This spirit-possession is essentially related to the duties of the piache in
 averting the effects of kanaimaton, for medically his most important role is
 that of exorcist. Fortunately no case occurred during our stay, but the general
 [274] procedure was reliably outlined to me by Indian eye-witnesses. The piache
 makes an infusion of green tobacco in water and snuffs this until he is thorough-
 ly "drunk." He then gives a great leap into the air and disappears. Informants
 have no idea where he goes, but this is always done inside a house at night with
 the fires low or extinguished, and one can assume that he somehow climbs in-
 [352] to the rafters. After a time he reappears and sits on his bench. This bench,
 [532] called murei, is unlike the ordinary bench, aponot¹⁷⁴, being higher and carved
 into animal form (Fig. 76). He holds in his hands sticks and rolls of leaves
 and beats time on the ground with these while he sings. ¹⁷⁴ Soon the piache is
 surrounded by a ring of light. My witnesses said that this was not visible to them
 but only to the piache, who presumably told them that it was there. Then the
kanaima appears standing on the chest of his victim and is also visible only to
 the piache, who asks the kanaima to abandon his prey. The kanaima's reply
 is told to the sufferer and if it is affirmative recovery follows within two days.
 If it is negative, the patient inevitably dies.

754 The Kamarakotos believe that kanaimaton have now been fairly well
 cleared out around Kamarata by the piaches, but that some still invade the
 [224] region and that they are still common in the Gran Sabana. The favorite haunts
 [361] of kanaimaton, at least around Kamarata, are the forests and this is the

174 [see footnote on p. 328, category 116 - Analysis]

Typical hunting magic with a

224 maraka and a song-spell appears in the Legend of Maichak on another page
 [773] (the episode of the second magic implement, stolen by Maichak from an armadillo). It is reasonable to assume that this represents magic once really used by mortals, but it is merely inherited by the Kamarakotos as part of the story and is not used by them. They do employ two very curious but typically Carib
 [824] magic means of increasing proficiency in hunting. One of these is to insert a cord of twisted moriche fibers into one nostril and to pull it out through the
 [304] mouth. The other is to scarify the skin of the arms and then to rub in a crushed
 [824] plant, called kumi, which is sometimes especially grown for this purpose. Our hunters ruefully admitted that none of the Kamarakoto hunting magic is really very effective.

General Religious Ideas.

773 Most of the myths, including the several that together make up the story of Maichak as given in this report, abound in unnatural and supernatural events and beings. To this extent, as well as to the extent that they embody explanations of natural phenomena and of creation, they include ideas usually related to religion. It would, however, be misleading to suppose that they form or assume the existence of any coherent or fixed body of religious doctrine. They are simply stories, fairy tales if one wishes, in which the non-natural is taken for granted.

- 776 There is firm belief in the existence of spirits, mostly inimical, of whom Piaima is typical and is the most important. Piaima and the kanaimaton are still very much in the Indians' minds. Various other spirits are believed to exist but are seldom thought of and few of the Indians can even name any of them.
- 777 Such simple theology as the tribe may have possessed seems largely to have
 [778] broken down and to have been forgotten except as it has a practical bearing on their lives, which means except as it relates to illness and misfortune. Prayer,
 [824] or any form of communication with the supernatural, seems to be unknown except as already suggested for the piaches.

In this rudimentary and probably degenerate system, misfortune is adequately explained by kanaima. Evil and sin do not appear to be considered supernatural or unnatural and there is no evident moral or ethical relationship of religion to their lives, which undoubtedly goes far to explain (or at least is correlated with) their carefree, happy, and, in a sense, sinless lives. They do not have any burden of original sin to bear. Felicity is considered a normal state for which no thanks are due to powers on high. I could not learn that they have any planting or harvest gods or ceremonies, which seems curious in an agricultural people.

775 No clear-cut statement of indigenous doctrine regarding the soul and life after death could be obtained, the usual statement being that "we don't know

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Another peculiar omission is that in almost all other versions of the extraordinarily widespread magic bench story, this bench is provided with spines, bits of jagged rock, wasp stings, or the like (the "Stachelsitz" motive) which inflict physical pain on the user, here the Buzzard King. In the Kamarakoto version the injury is emotional, not physical: he is frightened. This is clearly related to the Kamarakoto "fear of fear," mentioned elsewhere. To them the infliction of fright is at least as serious as the infliction of pain.

[152]

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The final episode combines a catastrophe with creation. The Kamarakotos also have legends of catastrophes by water, but these obviously contain recent intrusions or are garbled versions of legends passed on from Indians who have been in contact with missionaries, so that I believed it impossible to be sure of any truly native elements and did not record them. This catastrophe story by earthquake leading to petrification is unusual, although the element in it of belief that local rocks and hills are petrified people and animals is widespread — compare Koch-Grünberg's Taurepán "Taten des Makunaima," which gives such origins for rocks and cliffs near Roroimá.

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The petrified progenitor of the Kamarakotos, who is strangely called by that name although it can only properly mean a tribe and not a person, still exists in Kamarata and we visited and photographed him (see Fig. 80).² He consists of a rounded outcrop of rock with a smaller, pear-shaped, weathered boulder on top. There is no real resemblance to a human figure or face. There are no drawings or carvings on the rock, no offerings, no evidence at all of a cult or other human activities, and the Indians who accompanied us showed neither awe nor respect for the rock, although solemnly agreeing that it is, indeed, the ancestor of the tribe. Questions as to origin and the name of the tribe were usually answered by reference to this legend.

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The other motif in the final episode, that of animal origin from human beings, is one of the most common elements in Indian folklore, and indeed in folklore generally. It is almost as elemental in primitive mythology as the motif, exemplified in almost every episode of this whole story, of animals that talk and act like humans. The likewise common inverse transformation, from animal to human, is seen in the episode of the Queen Buzzard. Mythology in general and that of the Kamarakotos in particular assume no basic distinction between animals and man. Many Carib tribes, and I think also the Kamarakotos although unable to establish the point beyond question, commonly apply animal names to people. The other frequent concomitants of such animal myths, such as animal totems and taboos, seem, however, to be entirely absent among the Kamarakotos.

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As a final comment, the unusual role played by Piáimá in this story should be noted. In other myths and in Carib thought in general, Piáimá is represented as an untrustworthy, bloody, and generally inimical being. Here he appears as a benevolent teacher. A connecting link between these anomalously contrasting

² [see p. 262B, category 116 - Analysis]

- 539 roles can, however, be seen in the fact that *Plaimá* is commonly represented
 ● 776 as a familiar of the *piaches*, although hopelessly dangerous to other Indians, and even as teaching the *piaches* their peculiar arts and spells.

Character and Habits

- 157 Much of Kamarakoto character is evident from what has already been said, for character is inherent not only in the social culture of a people but also in what they make and use, in what they eat and drink, and in how they talk. Of course Kamarakotos show marked differences in personal character, but it is quite possible to speak also of a tribal norm in this respect. Indeed it was our impression that they are more uniform in character than are most civilized communities, and this is natural because of the almost complete uniformity in their lives, lack of division of labor or differentiation of habits as between different household groups, frequent social contacts with each other, and fairly uniform genetic heritage.

- 157 The Kamarakotos are Caribs and the Caribs have a bad name historically.
 171 Many of them were cannibals and they have even given us our word "cannibal."²²³
 197 Many Caribs were quarrelsome and warlike, a scourge to their neighbors and a
 264 terror to the white invaders. Some of them, notably the *Motilonés*, have not been conquered to this day and still exact a heavy toll of life from those who attempt to travel in their fastnesses. Such a picture is, however, completely
 157 and ridiculously false as applied to the Kamarakotos. Their most obvious character traits, as we saw them, are mildness and gaiety. They are happy, affectionate people who seldom quarrel and seldom show the slightest sign of anger or of opposition.

Humor.

- 157 Kamarakotos are anything but dour and silent — they do not belong to
 152 what some popular writers in North America call the "ugh" school of Indians. On the contrary, they chatter endlessly and their facile emotions are usually obvious. The common facial expression is a broad smile, and any amusing
 157 incident gives rise to gales of loud laughter. They have a keen sense of humor
 522 and are constantly joking. Puns are in high favor (I have noted some on previous pages). A few other incidents exemplify the sort of things that the Kamarakotos think are funny (and we shared this opinion). The fact that a flock of chickens included only roosters gave rise to obvious comments, gaily received. When I had been measuring their heads and we were about to set off to visit "Kamarakoto," the enormous stone that is believed to be their petrified ancestor, I was told to be sure to bring my calipers (span about 30 centimeters)
 223 [see footnote on pp 332-33, category 116 - Analysis]
 1 [text continues on p. 263]